

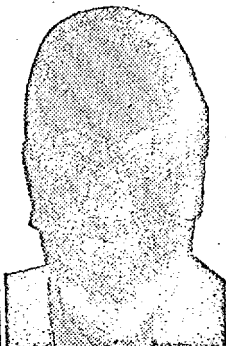
TRIBUNE

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S - 1,016,275Capitol ViewsU. S. Faces Nuclear  
Peril or Surrender

BY WILLARD EDWARDS

WASHINGTON, May 21—After secret hearings, one of the most prestigious congressional committees, traditionally averse to alarmism, has reached this ominous conclusion:



The United States, unless it moves quickly to counter a rapidly expanding Russian naval threat, faces a future in which it will have to surrender to the Soviets on all issues or risk nuclear annihilation. Any delay may mean "no future."

Edwards Never before, perhaps, has the warning of an impending national crisis been couched in terms so blunt and uncompromising.

The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, which voiced it, is an unusual combination of nine senators and nine representatives, created to exercise legislative control in all matters affecting development of the most terrifying force known to man.

Perhaps because this jurisdiction is so sobering, the committee is customarily nonpolitical and bipartisan. It has 10 Democratic and 8 Republican members, some hawks, some doves, some conservative, some liberal. It conducts most hearings in secret and usually avoids publicity.

Its findings assumed added significance in view of yesterday's announcement by Moscow and Washington of an apparent breakthrough in arms control talks, hinting at Russia's motive for agreeing, after 18 months of stalling, to discuss a curb on offensive as well as defensive weapons.

THE REPORT WAS BASED mainly on the closed-door testimony of Vice Adm. H. G. Rickover on the status of the naval nuclear propulsion program which he developed and directs.

But the 278-page volume also contains hitherto unpublished official reports and statements by other experts. The committee mentioned that it had received a briefing by CIA Director Richard Helms on the activities of Soviet naval forces in all the oceans of the world.

All this evidence, even the heavily censored to delete classified information, furnished a dismaying portrayal of rapidly increasing Communist sea power coincident with a deteriorating American Navy.

The bald facts: Russia's total surface fleet of 2,009 units compares with a U. S. surface fleet of 563 units. Its total submarine strength, 355; the United States, 142. The advantage in nuclear submarines in which we long took comfort has disappeared.

Soviet ballistic missile submarines now patrol off both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts in easy range of 95 per cent of America's urban industrial areas.

NOTING THAT RUSSIA also has passed the U. S. in the field of long range ballistic missiles, the committee concluded that unless prompt measures are taken to build up a nuclear Navy, the U. S. will have "to give in on all issues. . . . There may be no future. . . . We will soon find ourselves unable to defend our national interests."

Strong words, these, but they were drowned out in the congressional clamor over other issues. To Rickover, it was an old story, this placidity in the face of what he regards as a genuine peril. He recalled that some newspapers criticized him as "inflammatory" a year ago when he predicted that Russia would go ahead of the U. S. in nuclear submarines. That forecast has been proved correct and Russia's submarine production rate [15 a year] will soon put it far in the lead.

The committee noted that the public is tired of war and averse to increased military spending. But it urged recollection of the statement by President Eisenhower quoted on the keel of the nuclear aircraft carrier which bears his name:

"Until war is eliminated from international relations, unpreparedness for it is well nigh as criminal as war itself."